

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AS-01 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01

TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 AGRE-00 /090 W

-----171232Z 109529 /44

R 170731Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7930

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 2586

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, VN, KS, SN, US

SUBJ: US-SRV TALKS AND US GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA

REFS: A. STATE 131482; B. STATE 130459

1. I SOUGHT FIRST AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITY FOLLOWING MY RETURN FROM HOME LEAVE JUNE 9 TO PRESENT POSITIONS OUTLINED IN REFTELS TO APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF GOS, AND ARRANGED MEETING WITH MINISTER OF STATE AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER LEE KHOON CHOY FOR JUNE 16. DURING THE MEETING I WENT OVER GUIDANCE CAREFULLY POINT BY POINT SO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING. A NOTE-TAKER WAS PRESENT.

2. LEE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR MY EXPLANATION OF US MOVES

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RE SRV AND GROUND FORCE REMOVAL FROM KOREA. HE WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT AT RECENT INDONESIAN CSIS SEMINAR AT BALI WHICH HE HAD ATTENDED, THERE HAD BEEN SEVERAL AMERICANS PRESENT WHO HAD LEFT IMPRESSION THAT US INTEREST IN EAST ASIA-PACIFIC REGION HAD DECLINED CONSIDERABLY AND THAT A US PULL-OUT MIGHT IN FACT YET OCCUR. AMONG THOSE PERSONS HE MENTIONED AS HAVING CONVEYED THIS IMPRESSION HE INCLUDED SEVERAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS,

A CORRESPONDENT OF THE WASHINGTON POST, AND AN AMERICAN PROFESSOR. HE QUOTED ONE CONGRESSMAN AS SAYING THAT US FOREIGN AID FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS DEAD.

3. I TOLD LEE I COULDN'T SPEAK FOR INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS, BUT THAT US POLICY REGARDING ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION WAS FIRM. WE WERE AN ASIAN-PACIFIC POWER AND WOULD STAY ON. THIS FACT HAD BEEN REITERATED BY SENIOR US OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARY, AND OTHERS SUCH AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OAKLEY. THE GOS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY FAMILIAR WITH THESE STATEMENTS. AMONG OTHER THINGS, HOLBROOKE HAD NOTED TO A STRAITS TIMES CORRESPONDENT THAT AFTER SOME POST-VIETNAM READJUSTMENTS NO FURTHER REDUCTIONS IN 7TH FLEET STRENGTH WAS PLANNED. ON FOREIGN AID THE SENATE HAD JUST APPROVED A GENEROUS AID BILL.

4. AS AN EXPRESSION OF CONTINUED US INTEREST IN SOUTHEAST ASIA IN PARTICULAR, I CITED THE VISIT TO SINGAPORE OF SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE BERGLAND, NOTING THAT THIS WAS THE SECRETARY'S FIRST TRIP OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES AND ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD LINKED HIS VISIT TO CONTINUED INTEREST ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S PART REGARDING THIS REGION. I NOTED IN ADDITION THAT THREE CONGRESSMEN HAD ACCOMPANIED SECRETARY BERGLAND, TWO DEMOCRATS AND ONE REPUBLICAN, THUS INDICATING BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA. INDEED, CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH HAD STRESSED THIS ASPECT DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE HERE WHICH HE AND CONGRESSMAN BALDUS HAD ATTENDED ALONG WITH SECRETARY BERGLAND. I STATED THAT REGARDLESS OF WHAT SOME INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS MAY SAY ON OCCASIONS SUCH AS CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CSIS CONFERENCE, POLICY WAS STILL DETERMINED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, AND THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ENJOYED A VERY STRONG DEGREE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUPPORT. FURTHERMORE, AMERICAN CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF ASIA-PACIFIC WAS INDICATED BY THE HIGH LEVEL OF US INVESTMENTS.

5. I THEN TOLD LEE I WANTED TO SAY THAT HAVING SERVED IN THE ASIAN-PACIFIC REGION OFF AND ON SINCE 1945, I CONSIDERED MYSELF A FRIEND OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. QUITE FRANKLY, AND SPEAKING AS A FRIEND, I BELIEVED THAT THE CONTINUED QUESTIONING OF US PURPOSEFULNESS AND RELIABILITY BY SENIOR LEADERS OF ASIAN COUNTRIES WITH WHICH WE MAINTAINED CLOSE RELATIONS, EVEN AFTER WE HAD REPEATEDLY GIVEN THEM REASSURANCES, WAS NOT HELPFUL. SUCH STATEMENTS WERE BEING DULY NOTED IN WASHINGTON AND COULD RENDER US RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES AND LEADERS CONCERNED MORE COMPLICATED, AND HENCE WERE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. I BELIEVE THAT LEE GOT THE POINT.

6. IN CONCLUSION, LEE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT TOP ADMINISTRATION

LEADERS IN WASHINGTON WOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT ON US FIRMNESS  
ALONG THE LINES WHICH I HAD JUST PRESENTED TO HIM. I SAID I WAS  
CONFIDENT THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE. HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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